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The GREEN HELL

TO FIGHT A FOE AS SAVAGE AND CRUEL AS THE JUNGLE ITSELF, THE BRITISH SOLDIER IN THE FAR EAST HAD TO THROW ASIDE TIME-HONOURED AND PROVED METHODS OF WAR WHICH WERE AS OUTDATED AS THE BOW AND ARROW... AND MATCH CUNNING WITH CUNNING, SURPRISE WITH SURPRISE.



Chapter 1 **ROAD BLOCK**

IN THE DENSE JUNGLES OF NORTHERN MALAYA, DEATH IS NEVER FAR AWAY. THE TIGER AND THE LEOPARD STALK THEIR PREY IN THESE SWELTERING GREEN SHADOWS. . . . AND SOMETIMES MAN TAKES A HAND IN THE GRIM DUEL OF THE HUNTER AND THE HUNTED.



IN THE WINTER OF 1941, A YOUNG ENGLISHMAN CAME SILENTLY DOWN A NARROW FIRE-TRACK. HE MOVED WITH THE LETHAL ALERTNESS OF A WILD ANIMAL, ALL HIS SENSES GROPING FORWARD TO TRAP THE QUARRY AHEAD.



The Green Hell

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WHEN TONY BURDEN HAD LEFT HIS DESK IN THE SINGAPORE H.Q. OF THE MALAYAN POLICE THREE WEEKS BEFORE TO COME ON THIS HUNTING TRIP IN THE NORTHERN JUNGLES, THE FAR EAST WAS AT PEACE. THE QUARRY IN THE TELESCOPIC SIGHTS OF HIS RIFLE WAS NOT YET HUMAN...



THREE THOUSAND YARDS DOWNWIND OF THE HUNTER, IN A CLEARING ON THE BUSH-CLAD HILLSIDE, A SAMBHAR STAG STOOD WITH LIFTED HEAD. BUT EVEN AS TONY'S FINGER CARESSED THE TRIGGER...



The Green Hell

TONY'S SHIKARI WAS A YOUNG MALAYAN CHINESE CALLED JOE PEI. JUNGLE BRED, HIS SENSES WERE AS ACUTE AS THOSE OF THE SAMBHAR STAG, WHICH HAD ALREADY VANISHED WITH A KICK OF ITS POWERFUL HIND LEGS. NOW TONY BURDEN SAW THE REASON FOR THE ANIMAL'S ALARM.



THERE WERE MEN IN THE CLEARING BELOW. SMALL MEN, YELLOW MEN. MEN CARRYING RIFLES, WITH THE BADGE OF THE RISING SUN ON THEIR HELMETS AND MALIGNANCE IN THEIR HEARTS... JAPANESE SOLDIERS.



The Green Hell

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FOR YEARS THE GROWING MILITARY MIGHT OF JAPAN HAD LOOMED LIKE A SHADOW OVER THE ORIENT. WITH FOREBODING IN HIS HEART AS HE SAW THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS BELOW, TONY BURDEN RELUCTANTLY LOWERED HIS RIFLE AND TURNED AWAY.



THE FIGHT WAS ON. TONY KNEW THAT INSTINCTIVELY. BUT BEFORE HE SQUEEZED THE TRIGGER HE HAD TO KNOW THE FACTS...



The Green Hell

THE YOUNG ENGLISHMAN HAD HIRED THE REST BUNGALOW DEEP IN THE JUNGLE TO GET AWAY FROM THE WORLD. NOW THE FEVERISH WORLD HAD CAUGHT UP WITH HIM.



SOLEMNLY, JOE PEI TUNED IN TO SINGAPORE. ACROSS THE DRIFT OF STATIC CAME A GRAVE VOICE...



The Green Hell

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THE INVASION OF MALAYA WAS OBVIOUSLY THE FIRST MOVE IN THE JAPANESE PLAN TO SEIZE THE VITAL BRITISH NAVAL BASE OF SINGAPORE IN THE SOUTH.

HURRY, JOE! I DON'T WANT TO STOP A JAP BULLET BEFORE THE WAR STARTS!



WITHIN TEN MINUTES, TONY AND JOE HAD PACKED PROVISIONS AND AMMUNITION FOR THEIR FORCED MARCH AND WERE LOPING WEST ALONG A NARROW FIRE-TRACK.

WE'LL MAKE FOR THE NORTH-SOUTH ROAD, JOE! LET'S HOPE THE JAPS WE SAW WERE ONLY A FORWARD PATROL!



THROUGH THE STEAMING JUNGLES OF MALAYA, THE ROAD FROM NORTH TO SOUTH CUT A BROAD GASH. IT WAS TONY'S PLAN TO JOIN THIS ROAD AND FIND THE QUICKEST WAY BACK TO HIS POLICE POST IN SINGAPORE.

ARMY TRUCKS, MASTER! BUT WHICH ARMY?

THEY'RE HEADING NORTH! THEY'RE BRITISH ALL RIGHT! THE JAPS ARE MAKING THIS A ONE-WAY TRIP TO MALAYA—SOUTH TO SINGAPORE! COME ON!



The Green Hell

A SMALL BRITISH AND INDIAN ARMY GUARDED THAT VITAL ROAD IN THE WINTER OF 1941 AS THE JAPANESE ADVANCED DOWN IT SOUTHWARD TO SINGAPORE. THE BRITISH TROOPS WERE IN A TRUCULENT MOOD.



The Green Hell

AS THE THREE TRUCKS GRATED TO A HALT BEFORE THE TWO LONELY FIGURES, RIFLES BRISTLED OVER THEIR STEEL SIDES. THE LIEUTENANT IN COMMAND OF THE DETACHMENT LEAPED DOWN WITH HIS SERGEANT.



SERGEANT ALBERT GREEN WAS A VETERAN SOLDIER, WITH A VETERAN'S SUSPICION OF NATIVES. HIS WORDS BROUGHT JOE PEI AN ANGRY PACE FORWARD.



The Green Hell

TONY QUICKLY PACIFIED THE LIVID JOE PEI. BUT HIS EXPLANATION DID NOTHING TO REASSURE THE BELLIGERENT LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD.



THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT'S EYES NARROWED.



The Green Hell

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THE MAIN JAPANESE FORCE COULD ONLY BE A FEW MILES AWAY AS IT ADVANCED SOUTH DOWN THE ROAD. WITH A SHARP COMMAND, THE LEUTENANT TURNED TO HIS N.C.O.



LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD GLANCED BRIEFLY AT THE TWO MEN HE HAD FOUND ON THE ROAD. HIS CASUAL ORDER AMAZED TONY BURDEN.



The Green Hell

THE ARMY OFFICER'S VOICE WAS COOL AND SARCASTIC. BITTERLY, TONY BURDEN GAVE HIS RIFLE TO THE VETERAN SERGEANT.



WITH AN UNHURRIED SMOOTHNESS, THE SMALL BRITISH ARMY DETACHMENT SET UP ITS ROAD BLOCK IN THE PATH OF THE JAPANESE ADVANCE. EVEN THE FUMING TONY HAD TO ADMIRE THE COOL EFFICIENCY OF THE WELL-TRAINED MEN.



The Green Hell

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THE BRITISH ARMY SEEMED PERFECTLY CONFIDENT OF ITS ABILITY TO HOLD THE JAPANESE INVADER UNAIDED. AND WHO WAS TONY BURDEN TO QUESTION SUCH CONFIDENCE?

WELL, WE'D BETTER LET THE BRITISH ARMY GET ON WITH IT, JOE!

CLIMB THAT TREE, CORPORAL, AND SEE IF YOU CAN GET THE JAP'S RANGE!

RIGHT YOU ARE, SARGE!

ASTRIDE THE ROAD, THE BRITISH SOLDIERS WAITED. ON EITHER SIDE LAY THE THICK AND MENACING JUNGLE. AND FIVE MILES TO THE NORTH, A MERCILESS AND CUNNING ORIENTAL ARMY MARCHED IMPLENABLY ON TO FULFIL THE INSATIABLE GREED OF ITS MASTERS.



The Green Hell

THE BRITISH WERE READY. RIFLES ALIGNED, COOL FINGERS ON THE TRIGGERS, THEY AWAITED THE ENEMY. ONLY TWO MEN IN THAT TENSE GROUP WERE IDLE AND USELESS.



THERE WAS BITTERNESS AND FOREBODING IN TONY BURDEN'S HEART, FOR HE KNEW JUST HOW CUNNING AND RUTHLESS WERE THE LITTLE YELLOW MEN THESE OBSTINATE BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE FACING.



THE JAPANESE OFFICER RAPPED OUT QUICK AND CONFIDENT ORDERS. MINUTES LATER AND A FEW MILES SOUTH, A SHARP LITTLE COCKNEY PEERED UP THE ROAD AND WHISTLED IN DISBELIEF...



THE JAPANESE COLUMN HAD DISAPPEARED. UNEASILY, THE BRITISH TROOPS STARED THROUGH EMPTY GUN SIGHTS AT THE ROAD FROM THE NORTH. TIME TENSELY PASSED.....



A WORRIED NOTE HAD CRESTED INTO LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD'S VOICE. IT BROUGHT TONY BURDEN, WITH A SUDDEN RESOLUTION, TO HIS FEET.



The Green Hell

A FAINT FLUSH OF ANGER DEEPENED THE TAN ON THE YOUNG HUNTER'S FACE AT THE ARMY MAN'S SARCASTIC WORDS. BUT HE KEPT HIS TEMPER...



AS LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD OUTLINED HIS TASK, HIS VOICE BECAME DEADLY SERIOUS, AND TONY GRIMLY ANSWERED HIM...



The Green Hell

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TONY BURDEN'S GRIM FORECAST HAD ALREADY PROVED TRUE. TO THE SOUTH, THE JAPANESE COLUMN WAS REFORMING ON THE ROAD AFTER ITS FLANKING MOVEMENT ROUND THE FUTILE BRITISH ROAD BLOCK.



STAGGERED BY THE JAPANESE CUNNING, THE BRITISH SOLDIERS TURNED THEIR UNEASINESS IN ANGER ON THE YOUNG POLICE OFFICER...

I KNOW THE JUNGLE, LIEUTENANT— AND SO DO THE JAPS!

WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO THEN? TAKE TO THE JUNGLE OURSELVES? NONE OF US HAS EVER BEEN IN IT, MAN! WE SHOULDN'T SURVIVE TWENTY FOUR HOURS IN THAT HELL!



THE BRITISH ARMY HAD BEEN GIVEN NO TRAINING IN JUNGLE WARFARE. THOSE THICK GREEN SHADOWS WERE A FORBIDDING AND UNKNOWN MYSTERY TO ITS SOLDIERS. BUT NOT TO THE JAPS...

IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE NOW, LIEUTENANT! IF YOU TAKE MY ADVICE...

NOBODY'S ASKING FOR YOUR ADVICE, BURDEN! FIGHTING THE JAPS IS THE ARMY'S JOB! SERGEANT, GET THE LORRIES ROLLING! WE'LL TRY TO BREAK THROUGH TO THE SOUTH!



The Green Hell



AT THE CORPORAL'S FRANTIC WARNING, THE BEWILDERED BRITISH SOLDIERS TURNED TO FACE THE CUNNING ENEMY BEHIND THEM. DEATH HAD STRUCK BRUTALLY FROM THE JUNGLE...



The Green Hell

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A THIRD OF THE SMALL BRITISH FORCE FELL IN THAT TREACHEROUS FUSILLADE OF SHOTS. THE REMAINDER FLUNG THEMSELVES INTO COVER BEHIND THE TRUCKS. BUT AS THE FOUR MEN ON THE ROAD SPRIENTED FOR SAFETY...



The Green Hell

TONY BURDEN DISREGARDED THE LIEUTENANT'S ORDER. WITH BULLETS SNARLING ABOUT HIS EARS, HE TURNED BACK FOR THE STRICKEN SERGEANT....

THANKS,
BURDEN, BUT
YOU NEEDN'T HAVE
HELPED!

FORGET IT,
LIEUTENANT!



THE SERGEANT WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED, BUT A FLICKER OF THE OLD OBSTINATE FIRE TWISTED HIS SEAMED FACE AS HE OPENED HIS EYES.

IT'S THAT
PERISHING CIVY.
WHAT GOT US INTO
THIS— HIM AND THAT
JAP PAL OF HIS !



Chapter 2. DEATH IN THE JUNGLE

THE SERGEANT'S LAST WORDS WERE FEEBLE BUT VITRIOLIC. THE SOLDIERS WITHIN EARSHOT LOOKED UP WITH NARROWED EYES AT TONY AND HIS CHINESE SHIKARI...



THE LIEUTENANT'S BRUSQUE ORDER HAD SAVED WHAT LOOKED LIKE BEING AN UGLY SITUATION. AND TONY, AS HE LAY WITH THE SOLID STOCK OF THE ARMY RIFLE AGAINST HIS SHOULDER, FELT A SUDDEN GRATITUDE TO THE TOUGH YOUNG ARMY MAN.



LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD HAD NOT CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT OUTSIDERS. BUT NOW, FROM THE EDGE OF THE JUNGLE, THE JAPANESE WERE SPRAYING THE ROAD BLOCK WITH BULLETS.



THE JAPANESE HAD NO WISH TO COME TO CLOSER QUARTERS. WITH THE JUNGLE AT THEIR BACKS, THEY KEPT UP A WITHERING FIRE ON THE DEFENDERS.

THEY'RE PICKING US OFF LIKE FLIES, LIEUTENANT! CAN'T WE DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?



LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD KNEW THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE COURSE OPEN TO THE SURVIVORS NOW. IT WAS A DESPERATE ONE, BUT ANYTHING WOULD BE BETTER THAN DYING LIKE RATS IN A TRAP...



THE SUDDEN SILENCE FROM THE BRITISH POSITION BROUGHT SMUG GRINS TO THE BRUTAL FACES OF THE JAP SOLDIERS.



THESE JAPANESE SOLDIERS WERE PART OF A DETACHMENT, FIFTY STRONG, SENT TO LIQUIDATE THE BRITISH FORCE AT THE ROAD BLOCK BY-PASSED BY THE MAIN JAPANESE ADVANCE. BUT THEIR JOB WAS NOT YET DONE...



The Green Hell

AS THE JAPANESE FOLLOWED THEIR OFFICER CONFIDENTLY ACROSS THE ROAD, A SUDDEN GLEAM OF SUNLIGHT ON NAKED STEEL STOPPED THEM IN THEIR TRACKS.



THE HANDFUL OF BRITISH SOLDIERS SWEEPED ACROSS THE ROAD IN A VICTIOUS BAYONET CHARGE. THE JAPS WILTED BEFORE THAT VENGEFUL THREAT OF STEEL AND AS THE BRITISH PAUSED, CRAIG'S VOICE LASHED OUT LIKE A WHIP!



The Green Hell

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ALREADY THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS WERE MELTING LIKE YELLOW SHADOWS INTO THE DARK JUNGLE. THAT GREEN AND BALEFUL WALL WAS VERY NEAR...



THE BRITISH SOLDIERS HAD CHECKED, BUT THE FIERCE VOICE OF THEIR LIEUTENANT BROUGHT THEM TO HIS SIDE. QUIETLY, JOE PEI SMILED AT HIS YOUNG MASTER...



The Green Hell

BUT IN THAT LIVID GREEN TWILIGHT, THE ENGLISH SOLDIERS WERE BLIND, IMPOTENT AND HELPLESS. WITH A BLUNDERING COURAGE, THE LIEUTENANT LED THEM ON:



THE ARMY OFFICER'S ORDER BROUGHT A SHOCKED PROTEST FROM THE EXPERIENCED HUNTER. BUT IT WAS TRUCULENTLY IGNORED. . . .

FOR MOST OF THESE BRAVE SOLDIERS, THIS WAS THEIR FIRST EXPERIENCE OF THE TROPICAL JUNGLE. FOR SOME, WITH A TERRIBLE SUDDENNESS, IT WAS TO BE THEIR LAST. . . .



THE SHOT HAD COME FROM THE IMPENETRABLE WALL OF FLESHY LEAVES. SOMEWHERE IN THOSE GREEN SHADOWS, A SNIPER WAS GRIMMING EVILLY BEHIND THE SIGHTS OF HIS RIFLE.

IF YOU BUNCH YOUR MEN TOGETHER, LIEUTENANT, YOU'LL LOSE THEM ALL THIS WAY, ONE BY ONE ! YOU'RE A SITTING TARGET FOR THESE JAP SNIPERS !

FOR THE LAST TIME, BURDEN, HOLD YOUR TONGUE ! WE'LL KEEP GOING, MEN, AND WE'LL KEEP TOGETHER ! I'LL GET MY HANDS ON THOSE MURDEROUS JAPS YET, SO HELP ME !

GRIMLY THE ELEVEN MEN STRUGGLED ON THROUGH THE THREATENING JUNGLE IN A BLIND AND FURIOUS HUNT FOR THEIR HIDDEN ENEMY.

THERE
THEY ARE —
JAPS !

The Green Hell

THE THREE JAPANESE VANISHED INTO THE LONG GRASS AS SMOOTHLY AS WILD ANIMALS. AND EVEN AS THE BRITISH RIFLES SWUNG VENGEFULLY UP, THE CLEARING WAS SUDDENLY EMPTY.



BAFFLED, THE NINE SOLDIERS FACED THE JUNGLE INTO WHICH THE JAPANESE HAD MELTED. AND WHILE THEY WERE STILL GLARING IN IMPOTENT FURY AT THAT GREEN WALL OF LEAVES...



AGAIN A JAPANESE SNIPER HAD CLAWED DOWN HIS VICTIM WITH A SINGLE SHOT. TO TONY BURDEN, THE TRAGEDY WAS SICKENING IN ITS FUTILITY.



THE BRITISH SOLDIERS, STALKED BY FEAR AND FRUSTRATED BY THEIR BLIND SEARCH FOR AN ENEMY TO HIT, TURNED IN UGLY RAGE TOWARDS THE TWO CIVILIAN STRANGERS. BUT CRAIG HALFORD HAD ALREADY CONTROLLED HIS MOUNTING HYSTERIA.



The Green Hell

DEATH STRUCK AGAIN TWO TORRID HOURS LATER. THE SURVIVORS WERE PUSHING IN SINGLE FILE ALONG A NARROW JUNGLE PATH WHEN THE SOLDIER IN THE REAR GRUNTED AS THOUGH IN SURPRISE.



THE SUN GLINTED WICKEDLY ON THE JAPANESE BAYONET. THE FRIGHTENED MEN STARED IN HORROR AT THEIR DEAD COMRADE.



LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD HAD BEEN BROUGHT UP IN A DIFFERENT, A CLEANER SCHOOL OF WARFARE. THE SILENCE AND STEALTH OF JUNGLE FIGHTING WAS SOMETHING HE HAD YET TO LEARN. HIS VOICE BROKE....



The Green Hell

BUT THERE WAS ONE MAN IN THE PARTY FOR WHOM THE JUNGLE HELD NO TERROR, AND HE WAS A CIVILIAN . . .

ENOUGH MEN HAVE BEEN KILLED, LIEUTENANT! WITH YOUR PERMISSION I'LL TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY! IT'S PLAIN COMMONSENSE! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO MOVE IN THE JUNGLE — AND HOW TO FIND SAFETY!

YOU'RE CRAZY!

FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT STARED IN ANGER AT TONY BURDEN. THEN A BITTER WEARY SMILE BROKE ACROSS HIS PARCHED LIPS . . .

— BUT I'M BEATEN, AND I MIGHT AS WELL ADMIT IT. ALL RIGHT, MISTER BURDEN, TAKE OVER!

THANK YOU, LIEUTENANT!

Chapter 3. **MISTRUST**

TONY SPOKE QUICKLY TO THE DEMORALISED ARMY MEN, AND WITHIN TEN MINUTES HE HAD ROUSED THEM FROM THEIR DANGEROUS APATHY AND LED THEM FORWARD INTO THE JUNGLE AGAIN.



NOW, MEN, LISTEN
TO ME ! KEEP ABREAST
OF THE MAN NEXT TO YOU !
MOVE SLOWLY AND QUIETLY !
WE'LL LIE UP AS SOON AS I
FIND A LIKELY
SPOT !

THIS TIME THEY AVOIDED THE OPEN TRACKS. STRINGED OUT IN LINE ABREAST, THE MEN MOVED FORWARD AT A SMOOTH, UNHURRIED, AND DISTANCE-EATING HUNTER'S PACE. AT LAST...



THIS WILL DO,
LIEUTENANT !

THANK
HEAVENS !



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TONY BURDEN SHRUGGED AWAY THE ARMY MAN'S THANKS. WHILE THEY ATE THE FOOD JOE PEI HAD DISTRIBUTED, THE TWO MEN CONFERRED.

WE MUST FIND A NATIVE VILLAGE WHERE WE CAN REST UP FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS, GET OUR STRENGTH BACK AND MAKE SOME FUTURE PLANS!



YOU KNOW BEST, BURDEN! I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO WAY OF HELPING OUR CHAPS BACK AT THE BRIDGE?

LIEUTENANT HALFORD'S THOUGHTS WERE CIRCLING UNEASILY ABOUT HIS FAILURE TO HOLD UP THE JAPANESE ADVANCE. BEEF TONY BURDEN COULD GIVE HIM NO COMFORT...

NO WAY AT ALL, LIEUTENANT! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? WILL HAPPEN ALL THE WAY DOWN THE ROAD TO SINGAPORE, THAT'S MY GUESS! AN ARMY THAT CAN'T FIGHT IN THE JUNGLE IS USELESS IN MALAYA!



DON'T RUB IT IN, BURDEN! YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF THIS PARTY NOW, BUT DON'T RUB IT IN!

A BRIEF ANGER FLARED IN THE LIEUTENANT'S EYES. THE LESSON HE HAD LEARNED HAD BEEN A BITTER ONE. A BRITISH ARMY WAS BEING DEFEATED IN MALAYA, BUT IT WAS STILL TOO PROUD TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE REASON FOR ITS DEFEAT.



MY MEN ARE READY, BURDEN!

READY, LIEUTENANT? LET'S GET MOVING! I'VE SENT JOE PEI ON AHEAD TO SCOUT FOR A VILLAGE!

AT DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, TONY BURDEN LED THE LITTLE FORCE WESTWARD INTO THE JUNGLE. JOE PEI WAS ALREADY ON HIS WAY, A FACT WHICH WORRIED THE LIEUTENANT.



SERGEANT GREEN'S LAST ACCUSING WORDS HAD IMPRESSED THE YOUNG ARMY OFFICER. AND THE MORNING'S TENSE MARCH THROUGH THE BROODING JUNGLE HAD INFLAMED HIS SUSPICIONS.



The Green Hell

EVEN AS TONY BURDEN SPOKE, JOE PEI CAME AT A RUN INTO THE CLEARING. HE WAS GRINNING BROADLY.



THE LITTLE PARTY FOLLOWED THE YOUNG MALAYAN WARILY THROUGH THE JUNGLE. LIEUTENANT HALFORD WAS NOT ALONE IN HIS SUSPICIONS...



THE TRACK BROADENED AS IT LEVELLED OUT AT THE FOOT OF THE HILL. AND THERE AS THE BRITISH SOLDIERS CLOSED TOGETHER WITH UNEASY HANDS ON THEIR RIFLES...



THE SAVAGE-LOOKING MEN WERE FRIENDLY MALAYAN VILLAGERS. BUT THE BRITISH ARMY DID NOT RELAX FOR A MOMENT.

THE HEADMAN IS WELCOMING US TO HIS VILLAGE, LIEUTENANT. WE MAY REST IN IT, HE SAYS! HIS PEOPLE ARE ALL HIDING FROM THE JAPS IN THE JUNGLE, BUT WE SHALL BE SAFE HERE FOR A FEW DAYS, HE SAYS!

HMM!! HOPE SO!



The Green Hell

THE HEADMAN OF THE VILLAGE GREETED TONY BURDEN COURTEOUSLY. AS HE LED THE WHITE MAN TOWARDS THE DESERTED VILLAGE, HE TOLD HIM OF THE GUERRILLA WARFARE HIS PEOPLE WERE EVEN NOW WAGING AGAINST THE JAPANESE INVADERS OF THEIR JUNGLE HOME.



THE HUT WAS THE LARGEST IN THE VILLAGE. UNDER ITS REEDED MAIN FLOOR THE HEADMAN REVEALED A SIGHT WHICH TOLD ITS OWN GRIM STORY...



The Green Hell

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SUDDENLY SILENT, THE WEARY MEN FILED UP THE LADDER TO THE LIVING QUARTERS ABOVE.



IN THE LIEUTENANT'S HEART, SUSPICION STRUGGLED WITH AN OVERRIDING DESIRE FOR SLEEP... AND SLEEP WON!



THE BEATEN SOLDIERS SANK DOWN ON THE MATTED FLOOR AND SLEPT. AS THE SHADOWS LENGTHENED, TONY BURDEN SAT AND SMOKED AND WONDERED ABOUT HIS OBSTINATE COUNTRYMEN.



The Green Hell

ACROSS THAT BARE FLOOR THE SUNLIGHT OF THREE SLOW DAYS STRETCHED AND WITHDREW. THE BRITISH SOLDIERS WERE REGAINING THEIR STRENGTH... AND THEIR PRIDE...



THE LIEUTENANT'S VOICE WAS SHARP WITH SUSPICION...



The Green Hell

41

WITH A NEW POWER IN HIS TOUGH YOUNG BODY, LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD STOOD UP AND GRIPPED HIS RIFLE.



THE LAST REMARK OF THE ARMY MAN BROUGHT A NEW AND BITTER ANGER INTO TONY BURDEN'S VOICE...



The Green Hell

THE ARMY MAN'S JEALOUS INDEPENDENCE WAS PROOF AGAINST THE CIVILIAN'S ANGER ...



BUT EVEN AS THE LIEUTENANT SPOKE, THE SOLDIER AT THE WINDOW FLATTENED HIMSELF TAUTLY AGAINST THE WALL, THIN-LIPPED, HE DROPPED A SINGLE WORD LIKE A BOMB INTO THE CROWDED ROOM ...



Chapter 4.

ENEMY PATROL

SUNLIGHT BLAZED IN THE CLEARING BELOW. BUT IT
WAS NO LONGER EMPTY. RASPING BOOTS DREW
ECHOES FROM THE DESERTED HOUSES. THIN EYES
PEERED FROM YELLOW-SKINNED FACES...

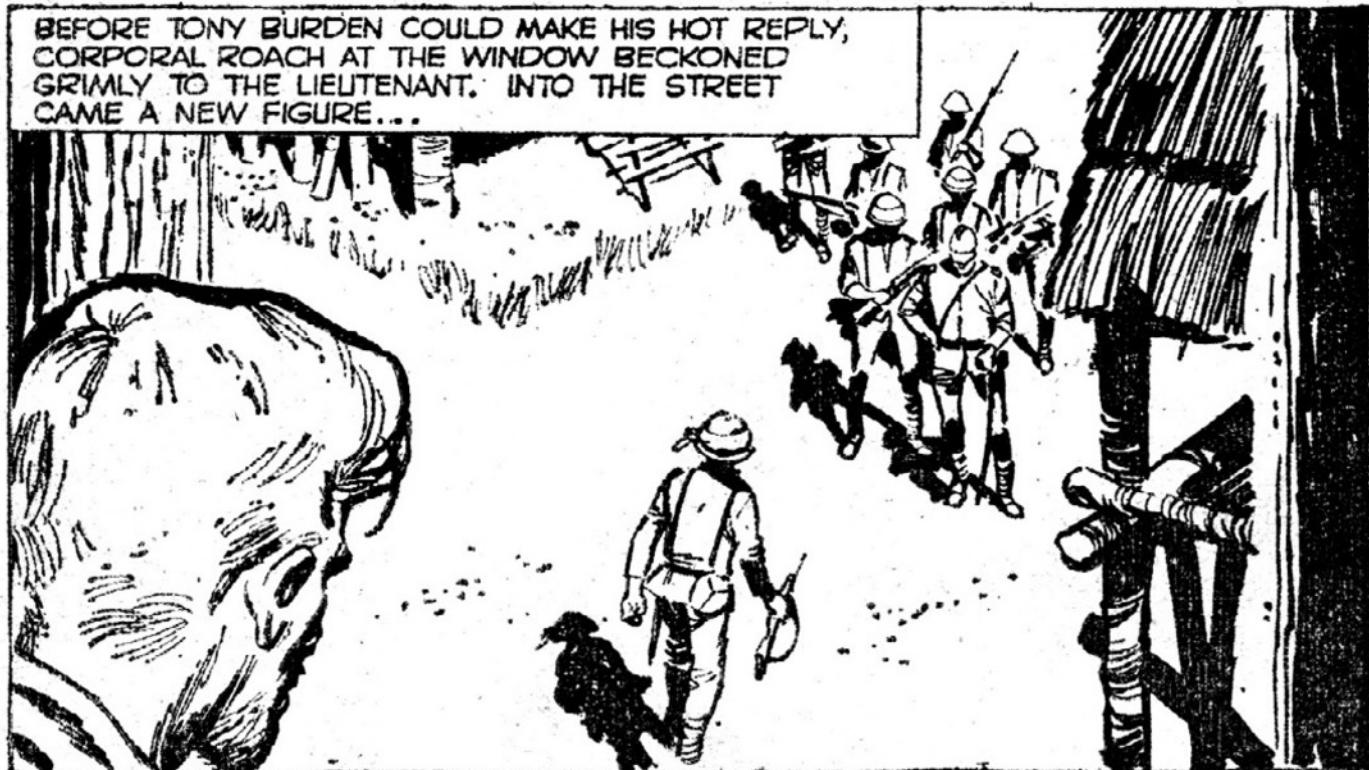


The Green Hell

LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD TURNED FROM THAT BRIEF GLIMPSE OF THE JAPANESE PATROL. HIS FACE WAS TWISTED WITH BITTERNESS.



BEFORE TONY BURDEN COULD MAKE HIS HOT REPLY, CORPORAL ROACH AT THE WINDOW BECKONED GRIMLY TO THE LIEUTENANT. INTO THE STREET CAME A NEW FIGURE...





The Green Hell

BY HIS QUICK THINKING AND COURAGE, JOE PEI HAD SAVED THE BRITISH SOLDIERS. BUT FROM THEIR HIDEOUT ABOVE, A RIFLE HAD BEEN ALIGNED ON HIS BACK...



WITH ONE EXPLOSIVE MOVEMENT, TONY BURDEN WRENCHED THE RIFLE FROM THE OFFICER'S GRIP. AND SO, IN THE STREET BELOW, THE MAN WHO HAD SURVIVED TWO VICIOUS THREATS TO HIS LIFE SMILED HAPPILY.



The Green Hell

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THE BRITISH SOLDIERS CROWDED TO THE WINDOW AS THE JAPANESE PATROL DISAPPEARED INTO THE JUNGLE. AND ALONE AMONG THEM, LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD COULD NOT SMILE...



BUT NOW A THIRD THREAT TO THE BRAVE AND UNSELFISH LIFE OF JOE PEI WAS CREEPING UP THE STREET BEHIND HIM. IT WAS TONY BURDEN WHO RECOGNISED IT.



The Green Hell

THE BAND OF MALAY VILLAGERS EYED THAT LONE MAN IN THE HATED JAPANESE UNIFORM WITH MURDEROUS EYES. THEY HAD ALREADY SURROUNDED HIM WHEN...



AS TONY AND CRAIG REACHED THE HOSTILE GROUP OF MALAYAN GUERILLAS, THEY PELL BACK IN BEWILDERMENT FROM THE CRUMPLED FIGURE OF JOE PEI.



The Green Hell

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THREE VICIOUS BLOWS HAD STRUCK THE YOUNG SHIKARI, BUT HE WAS TOUGH AND HE WAS ALIVE. NOW HE SMILED GRAVELY UP AT THE TWO ENGLISHMEN.



THERE WAS A NEW EMOTION IN THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT'S VOICE. JOE PEI HEARD IT AND SMILED AGAIN.

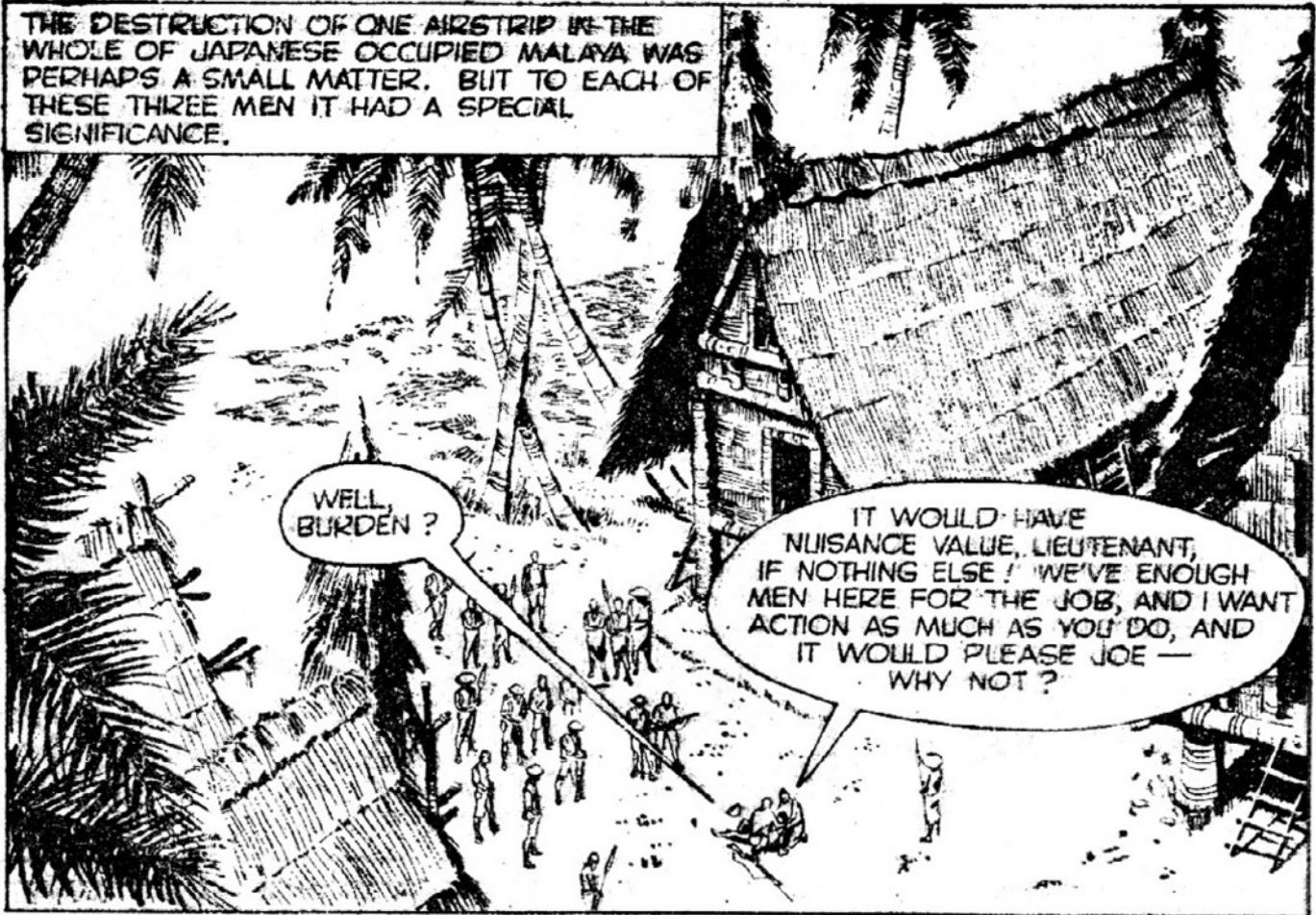


JOE PEI CLOSED HIS EYES BRIEFLY. WHEN HE OPENED THEM AGAIN, A SPARK OF DEFIANT ANGER LIT THEIR GENTLE BLACK DEPTHS.

YOU CAN DO SOMETHING FOR ME, LIEUTENANT! THE OFFICER TALKED OF AN AIRSTRIP! HIS MEN WERE TO GUARD IT! THEY BRING MORE JAPANESE DEVILS INTO MY POOR COUNTRY IN THEIR AEROPLANES! IF YOU COULD DESTROY THAT AIRSTRIP—BUT PERHAPS I SHOULD NOT ASK THAT!



THE DESTRUCTION OF ONE AIRSTRIP IN THE WHOLE OF JAPANESE OCCUPIED MALAYA WAS PERHAPS A SMALL MATTER. BUT TO EACH OF THESE THREE MEN IT HAD A SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE.



TO JOE, THE RAID WOULD MEAN REVENGE... TO TONY, ACTION... AND TO CRAIG, A CHANCE TO WORK OUT THE NEW IDEAS OF WARFARE WHICH WERE ALREADY STIRRING IN HIS MIND.



WITHIN THIRTY MINUTES, THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE ATTACK ON THE AIRSTRIP HAD BEEN COMPLETED. WHILE CRAIG MUSTERED HIS MEN, TONY SOUGHT THE HELP OF THE VILLAGE HEADMAN.



WHEN ALL WAS READY, TONY BURDEN SETTLED THE LAST AND MOST IMPORTANT DETAIL OF ALL WITH LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD...

DON'T ARGUE, LIEUTENANT! YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED FOR THIS SORT OF SHOW, AND I HAVEN'T! YOU'RE IN COMMAND, AND I'LL TRY TO GUIDE YOU!

THERE WAS A NEW RESPECT NOW BETWEEN THE TWO MEN. EACH SAW AND RECOGNISED IN THE OTHER QUALITIES THEY HAD BEEN BLIND TO BEFORE. TEN MINUTES LATER...

THANKS, BURDEN! LET'S GET MOVING! THEN!



Chapter 5. A GRIM LESSON

THE STRANGELY-ASSORTED FORCE MOVED SILENTLY INTO THE JUNGLE. FOR TWO HOURS, THEY SLIPPED ON THROUGH THE THICK GREEN SHADOWS. THEN . . .



THERE WERE FOOTPRINTS IN THE LOOSE DUST OF THE TRACK THEY WERE FOLLOWING. TO THE KEEN AND JUNGLE TRAINED EYES OF TONY BURDEN, THEY TOLD A CLEAR STORY.





LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD KNEW NOW THAT THE JUNGLE WHICH HE HAD FEARED COULD GUIDE AND HELP A MAN WHO KNEW ITS SECRETS. HE WAS LEARNING FAST... AN HOUR LATER...



The Green Hell

TONY BURDEN SANK INTO THE COVER OF THE SHRUBS AT THE EDGE OF THE JAPANESE AIRFIELD...



NARROWLY, LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD SIZED UP THE SITUATION. NOW HE WAS BRINGING THE PACKED EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST FIVE VIOLENT DAYS IN THE JUNGLE TO BEAR...



THE LIEUTENANT'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE AND REALISTIC. HIS FUTILE PRIDE IN THE BRITISH ARMY HAD GIVEN WAY TO COLD LOGIC.



The Green Hell

A SOFT TEN-MINUTE APPROACH ROUND THE JUNGLE PERIMETER OF THE JAPANESE AIRSTRIP BROUGHT THE BRITISH SOLDIERS TO THEIR POSITION. CRAIG GAVE A LAST QUICK GLANCE ALONG THE LINE.



ON THE AIRSTRIP, THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS GATHERED AIMLESSLY IN GROUPS. AS THEY WERE NOW SO FAR BEHIND THE FRONT LINES, WHAT NEED WAS THERE FOR CAUTION? BUT SUDDENLY....



The Green Hell

57

THE FIRST FUSILLADE OF BULLETS, A CURTAIN OF LEAD, RIPPED DEATH AND PANIC INTO THE UNGUARDED JAPANESE. BLINDLY, THEY FOLLOWED THE LEAD OF THEIR OFFICER...



AS CRAIG AND HIS MEN CAME OUT ON TO THE AIRSTRIPE, TONY AND THE MALAYANS CROUCHED DEEPER IN CONCEALMENT. THE FIRST JAPANESE PLUNGED INTO THEIR MIDST, AND STILL THEY DID NOT MOVE.



The Green Hell

LEAN BROWN HANDS TIGHTENED THEIR GRIP ON SHARP KNIVES. KEEN EYES NARROWED. THE BLUNDERING OF THE PANICKY JAPANESE SOLDIERS WAS THE ONLY SOUND IN THE HUSHED JUNGLE. SUDDENLY...



OUT OF THE GREEN AND LIVID SHADOWS LEAPED THE MALAYAN GUERRILLAS. CRUEL BLADES CUT SHORT THE CRIES OF THE JAPANESE. THE BATTLE WAS OVER IN THIRTY TERRIBLE SECONDS. . . .



The Green Hell

33

OUT OF THE CHILLING CLAMOUR OF THE JUNGLE WALKED A GRIM-FACED TONY BURDEN. SLOWLY HE CROSSED THE EMPTY AIRSTRIP TO MEET LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD.



The Green Hell

BOTH MEN KNEW THAT SOMETHING MORE MOMENTOUS HAD HAPPENED THAT DAY THAN THE MERE WRECKING OF AN ENEMY AIRSTRIP. THEY KNEW NOW THAT THE JAPS COULD BE OUTWITTED IN THE JUNGLE.



BUT CRAIG'S FIRST THOUGHT WAS FOR JOE PEI.



The Green Hell

61

ON THE ENEMY AIRFIELD, HARSH FIRES MARKED THE WRECKED LANDING INSTALLATIONS AND THE MALAYANS WERE MAKING THE STRIP UNUSABLE. THE JOB WAS DONE...



NOW THE THOUGHTS OF THE TWO ENGLISHMEN TURNED TO THE GRIM CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE.



The Green Hell

CRAIG WAS READY NOW TO START THE LONG FIGHT BACK TO FREEDOM...

BOTH, TONY!
YOU CAN HELP ME
AND THE OTHERS TO
ESCAPE, AND YOU CAN GET
OUT WITH US AND TRAIN THE
ARMY IN JUNGLE WARFARE!
WHICH WAY DO WE HEAD,
SOUTH TO SINGAPORE?

SINGAPORE
WILL BE LOST, CRAIG,
AND MALAYA WITH IT! THE
ARMY CAN'T RETRAIN ITSELF
OVERNIGHT! NO, I'LL TAKE YOU
NORTH THROUGH THE JAP LINES
TO BURMA! THERE'LL BE
FIGHTING ENOUGH THERE SOON
IF I KNOW THE JAPS!



BUT FIRST THERE WAS A DEBT THE YOUNG ARMY OFFICER HAD TO PAY...



LIEUTENANT CRAIG HALFORD HAD GAINED A NEW AND FINER STRENGTH IN THOSE TESTING FIVE DAYS SINCE THE SETTING UP OF THE ROAD BLOCK.



The Green Hell

JOE PEI RECOGNISED THAT NEW STRENGTH IN THE YOUNG ENGLISH ARMY OFFICER. AND HE KNEW IT WAS A STRENGTH WHICH WOULD ONE DAY ECLIPSE THE RISING SUN OVER MALAYA.



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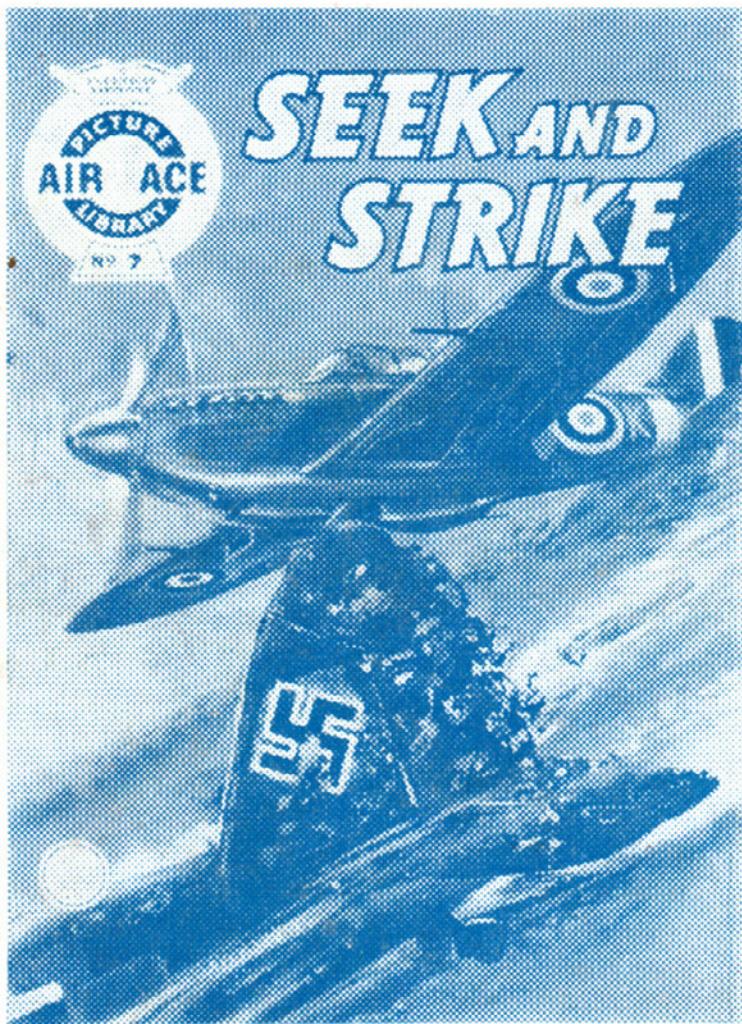
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